



# Orting Bridge for Kids Fact Sheet

March 2009

## What is the Orting Bridge for Kids project?

The Orting Bridge for Kids project is a proposed evacuation route for students of the Orting School District and the community in the event of a lahar (mudflow) originating on Mount Rainier. The growing population of the Orting Valley is located along SR 162 just upstream of the confluence of the Carbon and Puyallup Rivers. A school complex is located at the northerly edge of downtown. This area could be buried in the event of a lahar. The current evacuation plan for Orting relies heavily on vehicles to transport people to safety. The proposed evacuation route includes pedestrian pathways, a tunnel under SR 162, and a pedestrian bridge over the Carbon River. This route leads pedestrians from the school complex to high ground on the Orting Plateau.

## Why is an Orting Bridge for Kids important?

Students and residents near the Orting school complex may have less than an hour to safely reach higher ground if a lahar should occur. The proposed evacuation route would provide a faster route for pedestrians to reach high ground on the Orting plateau.

Sensors on Mount Rainier are intended to warn residents in the valley at the start of a lahar. These early warnings are essential as a lahar can flow up to 50 miles per hour. The Orting school complex is 30 miles from Mount Rainier, making the estimated arrival time about 40 minutes from the start of a lahar to when it reaches town.

## Why is a Bridge the best option?

The Orting plateau, located across the Carbon River to the east of downtown, is the nearest high ground. A bridge across the Carbon River is needed to accommodate pedestrians to the Orting plateau within the estimated lahar timeframe. A 2006 study assessed potential alternatives for the location of the pedestrian bridge and selected what is known as the Rocky Road NE/Orting Treatment Plant location as the most effectual in evacuating the school complex and the nearby community.



This aerial photo of Orting shows the proximity of the Orting Plateau across the Carbon River.

The highlighted areas show the preferred location for the evacuation route.

## **What steps are being taken in the current design process?**

The current design process includes the following.

- Preparing a preliminary design of the evacuation route and crossings of SR 162 and the Carbon River,
- Identifying the required right-of-way,
- Fulfilling the environmental and permit requirements, and
- Estimating the construction and long-term maintenance costs.

At the end of this process, the project partners will be able to make decisions about how to secure funding to finalize the design, purchase land, and build and maintain the facilities.

## **What are the next steps for the Orting Bridge for Kids?**

The next phase would continue design work and complete the tasks needed prior to beginning construction. They include the following:

- Engineering to identify the type, size, and locations of design features for the selected route,
- Environmental studies necessary for project permitting and environmental approval,
- Right-of-way plans identifying lands needed to construct the project, and
- Cost estimate for construction, long-term maintenance and operations.

## **What is the preliminary design process timeline?**

The preliminary design process is a yearlong effort which began in January 2009, and is targeted for completion by January 2010.

## **Who are the project partners?**

Pierce County is leading the project design team in coordination with the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED), Orting Bridge for Kids Committee, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), City of Orting, Orting School District, and the US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

## **How is this project phase being funded?**

State gas tax:	\$850,000
FHWA:	\$645, 975
CTED:	\$1,331,000
Total funding:	\$2,826,975

## **Where can I get additional information?**

For additional information, visit the project website (see below) or contact

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For Information regarding the Bridge 4 Kids Committee visit [www.bridge4kids.org](http://www.bridge4kids.org)